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NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS

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ADDRESS ON NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS.

By Herbert W. Gleason.

It has been my good fortune to visit all of the more prominent national parks of the country, in many cases repeatedly, and also many of the national monuments. From more than a thousand photographs taken on these various trips a brief selection has been made for presentation on this occasion, the object being, not to give a comprehensive view of the scenic beauty of the national parks, which would take many evenings, but simply to indicate here and there some of the more striking features.

The principal national parks of the country fall readily into two divisions, geographically; first, those which are found along the range of the Rocky Mountains, and secondly, those which are found on the Pacific slope. Beginning with the first division, Yellowstone Park naturally claims chief attention, not only because it is the largest of all the parks and was the first to be established, but also because it possesses many features which are absolutely unique. Indeed, in the minds of many people it is the only national park which we possess—they have never heard of any others.

On the splendid arch of basaltic rock which stands at the northern entrance to Yellowstone Park there has been engraved the legend: "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people," a sentiment which may well serve as the text for any discourse upon our national parks, and also as an appropriate rallying cry in all efforts for their protection and perpetuation. Yellowstone Park would deserve its establishment if only on account of the beauty of its ordinary features of mountain, lake, and river; but it has worthily commanded world-wide attention because of the wonderful variety and splendor of its volcanic phenomena. Prominent among these are the remarkable terraces and travertine deposits at the Mammoth Hot Springs. Here the "Minerva" Terrace, "Cleopatra" Terrace, "Jupiter" Terrace, and many similar formations constitute an assemblage of extraordinary interest, while the manifold rainbow tints of the travertine are exquisitely beautiful. So with regard to the multitude of hot springs and boiling pools—the "Beryl," "Punch Bowl," "Morning Glory," "Oyster," "Emerald," etc.—one finds here infinite variety in form and color, as well as never-ceasing charm. But Yellowstone Park is famous more especially for its geysers—those

relics of old-time volcanic activity so startling in their habit and so mysterious, at first sight, in their operation. No other locality in the world equals the Yellowstone in the number, variety, and magnificent display of its geysers. It is worth a long journey just to behold a single eruption of "Old Faithful."

Every visitor to Yellowstone Park notes with delight the surprising tameness of the wild animals. The bear, deer, elk, antelope, squirrels, marmots, and even the birds evince a confidence in man which speaks volumes in favor of the policy of protection which has been accorded to all wild animals in the park, and it is a welcome fact that the same policy in the case of other parks is producing the same happy result.

The climax of beauty in Yellowstone Park is found in the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. Here on the walls of this canyon nature seems to have exhausted her palette of colors. Such brilliancy is found nowhere else on earth. As Enos Mills happily says, it is "lined with the sunset." Standing on Lookout Point, facing the Great Falls, one is almost carried away with the supernal beauty and fancies himself suddenly transported to another world. No wonder that more than one skilled artist, seeking to reproduce the scene, has dropped his brush in utter despair.

The second largest park along the crest of the Rockies is Glacier Park in Montana, so called because of the fact that within its borders are found more than 60 living glaciers. These glaciers, however, are all small and do not compare with the glaciers in Mount Rainier National Park, or even with those in Mount Olympus National Monument. But Glacier Park excels in other features, especially its mountain lakes, many of which surpass in beauty those of any other section of the country. At the western entrance to the park lies Lake Benton, a superb sheet of water 10 miles long, and affording glorious views of the surrounding mountains. Corresponding to this, at the eastern entrance, is Lake St. Marys, also about 10 miles long, from whose shores there rise abruptly stupendous mountain peaks, giving views of rare sublimity. St. Marys is always beautiful, even when the storm clouds gather and the thunder rolls and the winds lash its surface in fury. One may spend many days of unalloyed delight by its shores.

And St. Marys Camp is an admirable base from which to make excursions to other points of interest. Among these the trip to Lake McDermott is especially popular. Here, close by the Continental Divide, there nestles an alpine gem of the first water. Rarely can one find a combination of mountain, lake, glacier, and forest scenery so commandingly beautiful. And from Lake McDermott, too, various side trips can be taken which are highly rewarding. One of the most enjoyable of these is that which follows

a mountain torrent up to its source in Iceberg Lake. Here, in a glacial cirque at the foot of great cliffs which rise sheer for 2,000 feet and more, lies a glacier whose ice is continually breaking off into miniature icebergs which float about the lake. Rather a chilly locality, one would say, for wild flowers to choose as a home, yet upon the very borders of this icy pool there flourishes a host of brilliant flowers—spirea, asters, harebells, geranium, elk grass, painted brush, etc.—a jovial company.

Return to St. Marys Lake may be made over Piegan Pass, a wonderful trip of some 22 miles, terminating at Going-to-the-Sun Camp, where the surrounding scenery is among the grandest in the entire park. The mountains, instead of being named "Mount Jones," "Mount Smith," etc., are named after old-time Indian chiefs or to commemorate Indian legends. "Red Eagle," "Little Chief," "Almost-a-Dog," "Single Shot," "Siyeh," "Going-to-the-Sun" are some of these. From St. Marys the trail leads to Gunsight Lake, with side trips to Blackfeet Glacier, Pumpelly Glacier, etc., and then over Gunsight Pass and on to Lake McDonald, passing Sperry Glacier on the way. The northern portion of the park, which, however, is reached with some difficulty at present on account of the scarcity of good trails, abounds in alpine scenery of the most rugged and picturesque type.

The Rocky Mountain National Park, one of the latest to be established, is located in the northern part of Colorado and includes some of the most impressive and strikingly beautiful scenery of the whole Rocky Mountain Range, centering about Longs Peak (altitude, 14,256 feet). The park is notable for its easy accessibility, being within a few hours' trip from Denver either by train or automobile. The western entrance is at Grand Lake, a delightful summer resort, and the eastern entrance is by way of the winding river canyons, fascinating in their wild beauty, which lead to Estes Park, a region long famous for its many attractions as a summer home. Estes Park, while not within the actual bounds of the national park, is yet an essential portion of the park, as it forms the chief starting point and base of supplies for all excursions in the park proper. One might easily spend a month in Estes Park and enjoy a new excursion almost every day. Among these trips may be mentioned the following: Up Black Canyon to Hallett Glacier on Hagues Peak; by way of the new Fall River road to Specimen Mountain and over the Continental Divide at Milner Pass; also over the divide by way of Flattop Mountain and down to Grand Lake; following the trail from Moraine Park up to Fern Lake and still higher to Lake Odessa; another trail to Loch Vale, Glacier Gorge, and Taylor Glacier; climbing to the summit of Lily Mountain, the Twin Sisters, Estes Cone, etc.

But the crowning excursion in Rocky Mountain Park, for those who are competent to undertake it, is the ascent of Longs Peak. This is usually made from Longs Peak Inn, the home of Mr. Enos Mills, who has rightly been termed "the father of Rocky Mountain Park" because of his long and persistent devotion to its interests. Under ordinary conditions the climb can be made without danger and with no especial difficulty, good muscle, steady nerves, plenty of "wind," and a fair degree of gymnastic ability being the requirements. After leaving timber line the surrounding country opens up in truly magnificent style, and on reaching the summit the view in every direction is sublime in the extreme.

Wild animal life in Rocky Mountain Park is peculiarly interesting, there being a number of bands of mountain sheep within the park, while everywhere one finds abundant opportunity to observe the habits of the beaver. As to wild flowers, the number is almost countless, and the midsummer display is beautiful beyond expression.

Colorado is fortunate in possessing still another national park, situated in the extreme southwestern corner of the State—Mesa Verde National Park. This park was created for the purpose of preserving a most interesting series of prehistoric cliff dwellings which were discovered a few years ago in some of the canyons of Mesa Verde. It is a decidedly novel experience to ride 30 miles to the summit of this mesa, and then, on coming to the rim of one of the canyons, without having previously seen a sign of human habitation, suddenly discover, halfway down the perpendicular wall of the canyon, a whole village of stone houses sheltered within a great cave. And it is yet more novel, on descending the steep trail leading to the cave, to explore one of these community dwellings, to note the plan upon which it is built, the excellence of the masonry—far surpassing that of present-day Indians—the peculiar forms of doorways and windows, the fireplaces, the curious underground kivas or ceremonial chambers, the attempts at frescoed walls in places, the finger prints of women and children made in the fresh adobe mortar when the stones were first put in place, the deep grooves in the solid rock where the men sharpened their stone axes, for these structures were built in the Stone Age when tools of metal were unknown. These grooves are pathetic, likewise the rough scarf marks still to be seen on the ends of beams used for supporting the second and third stories of the dwellings. Who these cliff dwellers were, where they came from, how long they lived here, where they went to: these are problems in archæology which are far from being solved. Three of the principal groups of buildings, the Cliff Palace, the Sprucetree House, and the Balcony House have been put in excellent repair, under Government direction, and bid fair to last for still another indefinite period.

The people who formerly dwelt here have left abundant evidences, not merely of their skill in masonry, but in the making of pottery and fabrics. They possessed also a considerable artistic sense for a rude people, for their implements and vessels of earthenware are profusely ornamented. An astonishing fact, hard to be explained, is that some of their designs duplicate early Christian and even ancient Greek and Egyptian patterns.

But Mesa Verde is not the only national park devoted to the preservation of antiquities. Casa Grande National Park, in southern Arizona, includes what is probably the most remarkable structure on this continent—a great stone house of singular construction and use unknown, so ancient that when it was first discovered by Spanish explorers in the early part of the sixteenth century it was then an antique ruin, and among the native tribes of the region there was no shadow of tradition respecting its character or history. Montezuma's Castle and the Tonto Ruins, also in Arizona, are included among the national monuments, both preserving excellent specimens of the cliff-dweller's work. Of similar character are the Navajo and Walnut Canyon Monuments, also in Arizona. In February, 1916, the Bandelier National Monument, in the Rio Grande Valley, N. Mex., was created. Within an area of 18,000 acres there are included a large number of cavate dwellings which have exceptional archæological interest. It is proposed to extend this area farther to the north so as to include the remarkable Puye Mesa, the whole to be called the National Park of the Cliff Cities. Still another region of fascinating interest along the same line is the Canyon de Chelly, in the Navajo Reservation, where are found a series of cliff dwellings in the red sandstone walls of a box canyon, which in itself possesses extraordinary beauty. This canyon is not yet even a national monument, but measures have been taken looking to its establishment as such.

Coming next to the national parks on the Pacific slope, the first to engage attention is the Mount Rainier National Park in the State of Washington. The crowning feature of this park is, of course, Mount Rainier, the highest mountain on the Pacific coast, and one of the most majestic peaks to be found anywhere in the world, for the entire altitude of the mountain (14,408 feet) can be seen from sea level. The glacier system of Mount Rainier is immense, covering 48 square miles and including 28 distinct glaciers, some of which are of enormous size. The mountain also presents many interesting evidences of its ancient volcanic activity. The ascent of the mountain is frequently made and proves a most inspiring experience. Like a diamond in a setting of emeralds, Mount Rainier is surrounded by a number of most charming natural parks, in which the display of wild flowers, in their abundance, variety, novelty, and brilliancy,

is quite on a par with the magnificent aspect of the mountain. High up on the mountain slopes one may sometimes meet with a herd of wild goats, also an occasional flock of ptarmigan—that bird of arctic habits which apparently loves to dwell amid perpetual snow.

But Mount Rainier was not always the highest mountain on the Pacific coast. In prehistoric times another mountain in southern Oregon towered above Mount Rainier. But this mountain, which was a mighty volcano like Rainier, met with a sad catastrophe one day. Either the whole top of the mountain was blown off in some terrific explosion or else the mountain swallowed itself, so to speak, the latter being the generally accepted theory of geologists. Whatever the fact was, we find to-day an immense caldera occupying the highest level of the mountain, and within this great crater there is a lake, 6 miles in diameter and with a maximum depth of 2,000 feet, of indescribable beauty. This lake is in the center of Crater Lake National Park—one of the most interesting and beautiful of all our national parks. The lake itself—a deep ultramarine blue in color, the steep walls inclosing it which rise in places to a height of 2,000 feet above the lake, the glowing tints of copper and sulphur and amethyst which the volcanic rock exhibits here and there, the graceful drapery of the mountain hemlocks both within and without the crater walls, the quaint "Wizard Island" which was upheaved after the major cataclysm, the neighboring snow-crowned peaks—all these combine to make a picture which the beholder will ever remember with utmost delight.

California rejoices in possessing no less than four national parks, as well as several national monuments Entering the State from the north, we first come to the Lassen Volcanic National Park, created in the summer of 1916, which contains, among other interesting volcanic phenomena, Lassen Peak (10,465 feet altitude), which has become widely famous of late on account of its awakening from a long slumber and indulging in a prolonged series of spectacular fireworks.

Yosemite National Park is surpassed in size only by the Yellowstone and Glacier Parks. Many people confuse Yosemite Valley with Yosemite Park. The valley is included within the park, but only as a single feature, the area of the valley being only about 8 square miles, while the area of the park is 1,125 square miles. Still, even if the valley stood absolutely alone, it would be well worthy of high distinction as a national park. For within this limited compass it seems almost as if nature had sought to bring together the most magnificent and graceful specimens of her handiwork. Yosemite Valley has been often described and illustrated, but in spite of this every visitor on entering the valley is met with a revelation of grandeur and beauty such as he had never before conceived. And the vision never palls. One may spend

weeks in the valley; he may visit it repeatedly, yet the wonder and the glory of it are ever fresh and awe compelling. El Capitan, Cathedral Rocks, Half Dome, Mirror Lake, Vernal Fall, Nevada Fall, Yosemite Fall, Bridal Veil—these are names familiar to a multitude of people through verbal descriptions and pictorial reproduction, but only those who have seen the reality can begin to appreciate what Yosemite Valley means.

But having seen Yosemite Valley one should by all means undertake a tour of Yosemite Park. Tuolumne Meadows, some 30 miles north of the valley, is now easily reached either by trail or automobile road and forms an admirable base from which to explore a large section of the High Sierra as well as to visit many localities of notable character in the northern portion of the park. Mount Lyell, Mount Dana, Kuna Crest, Tioga Lake, Mono Pass, McClure Glacier, Dog Lake, Conness Peak, Piute Mountain, Rodgers Lake, Matterhorn Canyon, Kerrick Canyon, Tilden Lake—these are only a few names. There is the marvelous Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, a stupendous gorge, beginning shortly below the Tuolumne Meadows and extending westerly for nearly 25 miles, carved out of the mountain mass by an ancient glacier, with walls rising sheer from 4,000 to 5,000 feet high, while through the narrow canyon there courses the Tuolumne River in one continual succession of glorious cascades and waterfalls. Difficult of access as yet—for there is no trail except through a small portion of the canyon—it rewards the explorer with some of the most magnificent canyon scenery on the American Continent.

At the lower end of the Tuolumne Canyon lies Hetch Hetchy Valley, in many ways a counterpart of Yosemite Valley, yet with a marked picturesque quality of its own. Those of us who have seen Hetch Hetchy in all its primitive beauty can not help a feeling of sadness in view of the fact that the valley has been given to San Francisco for an artificial water reservoir.

The Sequoia and General Grant National Parks were established for the purpose of conserving some of the most notable groves of that magnificent tree, the *Sequoia gigantea*, relic of an earlier geologic age, found only in California, and commanding the highest interest on account of its immense size, its majestic dignity, and its hoary antiquity. Unquestionably, these trees are the largest and the oldest of all living things. Many of them are over 300 feet high, with a trunk diameter at base of from 30 to 40 feet, and an age dating back certainly 5,000 years and more. Few objects in all the outdoor world are worthy of such heartfelt reverence.

It is proposed to extend the boundaries of the Sequoia Park to include a region of mountainous country along the crest of the

Southern Sierra and its western slope drained by the Kings River and its tributaries. If this shall be done, the new park will bring under national protection Mount Whitney (the highest elevation within the United States proper), Mount Williamson, Mount Tyndall, the famous Kings River Canyon, Tehipite Valley, and many other mountains and valleys of great scenic interest.

Brief reference may be made in closing to some of the more notable national monuments, which are to all intents and purposes national parks, though occupying a somewhat different status and being created by presidential proclamation instead of a specific act of Congress.

The Devils Postpile, in California, is one of the most remarkable collection of hexagonal basaltic rock columns to be found anywhere in the world. The Devils Tower, in Wyoming, is a closely allied formation, rising to a height of more than 1,200 feet above the surrounding plain. The Colorado Monument and the Wheeling Monument, both in Colorado, present some very striking results of erosion in the form of lofty monoliths and curiously carved and colored cliffs. The Natural Bridges Monument, in southern Utah, includes three of the largest and most striking natural rock bridges known anywhere. A similar formation is the Rainbow Bridge Monument, also in Utah, the height of which is 309 feet and the span 278 feet. The Petrified Forest Monument, in Arizona, includes three areas where are found the silicified remains of ancient coniferous trees, of great interest and beauty. Mount Olympus Monument, in the northwestern corner of Washington, is a mountain area of superb character and unusual scientific interest, its extensive glacier system being particularly notable. A plan is on foot to give this region the full status of a national park, which it amply deserves. The Sieur de Monts Monument, on Mount Desert Island off the coast of Maine, a locality of historical interest and scenic beauty, is the only national park or monument yet created east of the Mississippi.

There are many grand canyons in the United States, but only one Grand Canyon; and by far the greatest, both in area and importance, of all the national monuments is the Grand Canyon of Arizona. No words can describe the awful majesty and the sublime beauty of this stupendous chasm. As Prof. Van Dyke has said, "Instead of its being, as is sometimes stated, the eighth wonder of the world, it is the first wonder of the world." A bill is now before Congress, with good prospect of its being passed, to make the Grand Canyon a full-fledged national park, and thus to preserve for all coming generations, under full governmental control and protection, this masterpiece of nature's production.

The Harriman Fiord in Alaska, an arm of Prince William Sound, is a proposed national monument of exceptional interest and attrac-

tiveness. Only 12 miles long and a mile or so in width, it is an amphitheater of sublimity tremendously impressive and exquisitely beautiful. On all sides rise lofty mountains whose summits pierce the clouds at altitudes varying from eight to eleven thousand feet above sea level. Five huge glaciers descend directly into the fiord, discharging icebergs with roars of thunder, while many other glaciers lie on the higher slopes, the azure hues of their pinnacles and crevasses glistening in the sunlight. Few white men have ever seen this wonderful fiord, but in coming days, with the opening up of the new governmental railway, it is certain to become widely known and prized as one of our finest scenic assets in all Alaska.

One other national monument should be mentioned, not merely for its intrinsic interest, but because it honors the name of one who devoted his life, in a very real and most effective way, to the welfare of our national parks—the Muir Woods of California. This is a tract of primitive redwood forest on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais, across the bay from San Francisco, which was deeded to the Government by Hon. William Kent, a Member of Congress, and named after John Muir, the eminent naturalist and writer, in recognition of his efforts to awaken interest in the wonder and glory of the outdoor world. A day spent with Mr. Muir himself in the Muir Woods was one never to be forgotten. Utterly oblivious of the fact that any special honor was conferred upon him in connection with the park, he was continually intent upon discovering new forms of beauty in the trees or shrubs or vines or flowers, all the time unfolding from his vast store of information facts of deep interest pertaining to the varied features of the park. And this was characteristic of his entire life. He gave himself in whole-souled enthusiasm to the study of nature's methods and mysteries, not solely for his own satisfaction, but that he might interpret them to others and thus reveal something of their wonder, their beauty, and their spiritual significance. To quote a word of tribute from one who knew him well:[1]

> His was the vibrant voice that sang of God's manifestation in the harmonies and beauties of nature. His was the hand that pointed the way to the clear and high places of earth. His were the feet that beat paths for others to follow, leading to shrines in the forest or meadow, on the glacier or cliff of rocks, by the river's edge, or on the mountain's summit. His name will endure, not alone because it is written upon the Muir Glacier of Alaska or among the giant Sequoias of the Muir Woods in California, but because it is written in letters of sincere love upon the hearts of thousands whose lives his own has sweetened and brightened for all time.

[1] Prof. E. S. Meany, of the University of Washington.

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